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UNCLAS ROME 001666

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SUBJECT: GOI WANTS LINATE DISPUTE RESOLVED

REF: ROME 000372

1. During a meeting with EcMin and Econoff May 6, MFA Office Director for North American Affairs Francesco Tafuri underscored the GOI desire to see a "final resolution" of the Linate codeshare dispute. Tafuri was reacting to the April 28 U.S. Department of Transportation extension of the review period for the joint American Airlines - United Air Lines complaint against Alitalia and the GOI over codeshare access to/from Milan's Linate airport. The GOI firmly believes AlitaliQs already addressed the complainants' concerns (refQ, and therefore the complaint should be closed. Tafuri claimed the open complaint is holding up a strategic agreement between Alitalia and Continental.

2. EcMin asked wh the GOI was willing to accept a solution that effectively prevented both U.S. and Italian airlines from competing in a market currently occupied by third-country carriers. Tafuri had no ready reply, but simply reiterated his position.

3. Comment: The MFA appears more concerned about closing the complaint quickly than finding a solution that benefits Alitalia and the two U.S. carriers. Unless the GOI can be convinced of the potential benefits under an alternative resolution, it will continue to press for the immediate closure of the Linate complaint. End comment.

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